

Chapter 1. Introduction

Connections 2025 is the long-range transportation plan for the Poughkeepsie metropolitan area, which includes all of Dutchess County (Figure 1-1). The long-range plan was developed by the members of the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC), the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the region, to guide transportation investment over the next twenty-three years. This plan is an update of the previous transportation plans adopted by the PDCTC in 1994 and 1998. A major component of the update is the addition of data from the 2000 Census. In order to maintain consistency wherever possible data from 2000 was used.

The 1994 *Transportation Plan* was the first long-range plan adopted by the PDCTC, and it was guided by the requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). Whereas previous transportation planning recommendations had focused in large part on accommodating increased traffic by expanding the capacity of the major roads in the county (e.g. Route 9, Route 44/55), the 1994 *Transportation Plan* looked at the entire transportation system: highways, roads, local and regional bridges, public and private bus systems, regional and national rail services, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The recommendations in the *Transportation Plan* and the 1998 *Update* include a combination of policies and projects designed to maintain existing infrastructure, provide new capacity for both transit and highways, expand available bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and to manage the existing metropolitan systems more effectively.

Federal Guidelines

Connections 2025 continues to be responsive to current regulations and guidelines related to transportation and environmental quality. The major federal programs that affect the plan are the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) enacted in 1998, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

TEA-21

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century built upon its predecessor, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. Central to the federal requirements is the development of a long-range (20 year) transportation plan that includes recommendations to develop and maintain an integrated surface transportation system.

The TEA-21 regulations proposed in 2000 included a list of seven factors that should be considered in the regional planning process and the development and implementation of the long-range plan. These included the consideration of projects and strategies that will:

1. **support the economic vitality of the metropolitan planning area**, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. **increase the safety and security of the transportation system** for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. **increase the accessibility and mobility options** available to people and for freight;
4. **protect and enhance the environment**, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
5. **enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system**, across and between modes, for people and freight;
6. **promote efficient system management and operation**; and
7. **emphasize the efficient preservation of the existing transportation system.**

Clean Air Act Amendments

The Clean Air Act Amendments stress the tie between transportation activities and the environment. Dutchess County, Putnam County and northern Orange County make up the Mid-Hudson Area, which is currently classified as a Moderate Nonattainment Area for the pollutant ozone by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Mid-Hudson Area was originally designated as a “marginal” nonattainment area and was reclassified to “moderate” in late 1994, because it failed to attain the established standard by the initial deadline. The transportation plan and all the transportation improvement programs must continue to identify measures and projects that will lead to attainment of national air quality standards in the metropolitan area.

An Overview of Past Trends and Where We Stand Now

The people and communities of Dutchess County have and still remain closely connected to the Hudson River. This relationship dates back to the region’s first settlers, who used the River as their primary means of travel and venue to conduct commerce. The economic power of the Hudson River naturally led to the creation of numerous settlements; the most populous and thriving of these communities lying near the Hudson. In the case of Dutchess County, the cities of Poughkeepsie and Beacon developed into sizeable and flourishing river-based communities. Portions of the region’s population gradually settled away from the River and occupied the agriculturally rich inland areas. This settlement pattern led to the creation of new roads, railroads, and ferries - all of which improved the linkages between communities and businesses.

Still, this early transportation network focused on the cities of Poughkeepsie and Beacon, both of which maintained their position as the economic and social centers of Dutchess County.

The nature of growth in Dutchess County stayed fairly constant through the age of sail and steam, but as was experienced by many American communities, the introduction of the private automobile vastly changed how and where we grew. The advent of the auto ushered in a totally new era in the field of transportation, which became more evident after World War II. The economic and population boom of Post-war America was not lost on Dutchess County. As an outer suburb of the New York City metropolitan region, Dutchess experienced very high rates of population growth throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. From 1950-1970 the county's population grew by 85,000. Such increases, coupled with growth in personal wealth and vehicle ownership, allowed more and more families to live out in the suburbs of Dutchess County and away from the traditional city and village centers. The economic centers of the county underwent a similar shift, with many commercial activities and industries choosing to relocate near major state roads (e.g. Route 9, Route 44, Route 52) and, in turn, closer to the suburban work force.

What evolved from these societal changes was a land use pattern closely connected to the use of private automobiles. As auto use grew, so did congestion on many major roads. As a result, transportation planners and highway engineers attempted to solve the problems of diminished capacity through the addition of more lanes on existing roads. These road improvements led to a greater dispersal of homes and jobs, which worked hand-in-hand to actually limit the transportation options available to many county residents. This was especially true for those residents without access to an automobile or the ability to operate one: the elderly, the young, the disabled, and the poor. These conditions continued through the 1980's and 1990's, but were less pronounced due to relatively good economies and the increased availability of private automobiles. However, unlike in previous decades, the region did not experience significant increases in road capacity during the 1980's and 1990's.

People, Employment, and Vehicles

Before we can address the specific transportation issues facing our area, we must first understand the variables affecting how and where we travel. Studying the county's population demographics provides us with such an understanding. By looking at estimates of future population, households, employment, and vehicle availability, we can better manage our existing transportation infrastructure to meet the county's anticipated needs.

The following section will describe the past and future trends associated with each demographic indicator - at both the county level and local municipal level. The US Census remains the major source for population, household, employment, and transportation data. Naturally, this plan relies considerably on figures from the 2000 US Census. The information has also been supplemented by estimates and forecasts from

other available sources.

Population Trends: People and Households

Understanding how and where our county grew in population represents a key ingredient in formulating a long-range transportation plan. In most cases, past trends act as good indicators of what might happen in the future, giving us an idea on the nature of future trends. The presence of more people and households in a community, whatever its size, will inevitably increase the demand on existing transportation systems. When looking at current travel habits, we can safely predict that increases in total population will lead to increases in vehicle usage. Of course, other variables affect the relationship between people and various transportation choices; these include the population's economic health as well as the land use patterns they live and work in. Yet, future population growth remains an integral part of measuring the future readiness of any transportation network.

Past Trends (1950-2000)

How did the county grow? Between 1950 and 2000, the population of Dutchess County increased by almost 105 percent or approximately 143,369 persons (Figure 1-2). The highest rates of growth occurred between 1950 and 1970, when the total population increased by more than 85,000. The number of households grew in similar fashion. From 1960 through 2000 households grew by 52,574 (112%). Accordingly, the average size of households fell from a 1960 high of 3.23 persons per household to a 2000 low of 2.63.

As mentioned before, the county experienced a re-distribution of population during the last half-century. Traditional population centers gradually lost their appeal and the area's suburban and rural communities grew rapidly. Towns such as East Fishkill, Fishkill, Poughkeepsie, and Wappinger experienced tremendous rates in absolute population growth; these four communities together had an increase of 81,063 residents between 1950 and 2000, which accounted for over 66 percent of the county's total population growth in the past fifty years. Other outlying municipalities dealt with similar pressures. The towns of Beekman, Hyde Park, and LaGrange each contended with growth rates exceeding 200 percent.

The population and economic growth taking place in the suburbs came at the expense of older cities. The City of Poughkeepsie lost 29.7 percent (12,179 residents) of its population between 1950 and 1990; the City of Beacon concurrently lost 5.8 percent of its population. However, the 2000 Census indicated a reversal in this trend of urban population loss. During the nineties, the cities of Poughkeepsie and Beacon each experienced moderate population gains (3.6% and 4.3% respectively).

Future Trends (Beyond 2000)

Current population projections for the county indicate a pattern of moderate growth for

the next twenty years. The Dutchess County Forecasting Project, conducted in 1996, estimated that the county's total population would approach approximately 313,000 people by 2020 - an 11.7 percent increase over 2000. A second forecast, finished by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), estimated a Dutchess County population of 313,800 by 2020 and a 2025 population of 332,700, which would represent a 19 percent increase from 2000. A third forecast, completed through a joint effort by NYSDOT and a private consultant, indicated a population of 304,000 by 2022; this forecast was based on Census 2000 data. Forecasts for many of the local municipalities mirror the county's growth trend. However, the towns to the South - Beekman, East Fishkill, and Fishkill - are projected to experience slightly higher rates of growth. All of these estimations are subject to many unforeseen variables, but it remains certain that some amount of population growth will occur (Figure A-1).

The composition of the county's population will also change during the next twenty-five years. Increases in life expectancy will result in people living longer, thus increasing the average age of the population. The over-45 population will grow sharply, while the under-45 population will decline slightly in absolute numbers, and more markedly as a percent of the total population (Figure A-2). This so-called graying of our population will be directly attributable to the aging of the "baby boomer" generation.

With relation to the number of future households, the Dutchess County Forecasting Project estimated the county's total would grow to 117,544 by 2020. This would be an increase of almost 35 percent, a bit higher than the estimated increase in the total population.

Travel Implications

Historical trends indicate that marginal increases in total population have led to disproportionately higher increases in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and auto availability (Figure 1-3). Given this, increases in the county's population will surely impact our existing transportation system. This seems more the case with the county's suburban communities, which are projected to undergo the highest rates of population growth in the next twenty years. Unfortunately, these very towns also suffer from scattered, auto-dependent land use patterns, making it more difficult for residents to use other forms of transportation.

This condition will worsen as the county's population continues to grow older. The increase of people in older age groups means that there will likely be more people who are unable to drive or walk long distances. This will create special demands for the transportation system, and implies that continued reliance on auto-dependent development might impair the mobility of a larger proportion of the population.

The growth in the number of households also translates into increased travel demand, since each individual household needs some means of support (employment) and some reliable method of transportation (an automobile).

Employment and Labor Force Indicators

Employment and labor force data also serve as key elements in determining the future viability of our area's transportation network. According to the 1995 New York State portion of the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS), work related travel accounted for over 21 percent of all daily personal trips and over 38 percent of daily vehicle miles traveled in the Poughkeepsie metropolitan area. Therefore, it is useful to anticipate where projected increases in jobs and workers will occur within the county, and use this information to plan for future mobility needs.

Past Trends (1950-2000)

As was the case with the county's population, the size of the labor force in Dutchess grew rapidly after WWII. During the three decades between 1960 and 2000, the county's employed labor force increased by over 119 percent. In Dutchess, as in other parts of the country, growth in the total labor force was largely fueled by two societal trends: more women working outside the home and the movement of baby-boomers from school to jobs.

While employment opportunities in Dutchess County rose, an amount of re-distribution occurred between job locations and worker origins. In 1970 there were almost 83,000 employed workers living in the county, and more than 86,000 jobs available (Figure 1-4). The vast majority of the county's workers (93%) worked in Dutchess, with most of the remaining workers commuting to jobs in surrounding counties and New York City. The balance of incoming workers originated primarily from Ulster and Orange counties.

This distribution changed by 1980, when the outflow of workers leaving the county each day for their jobs surpassed the inflow of workers coming into Dutchess County to work. In 1990, 75 percent of county residents worked in Dutchess County. By 2000, the number of employed workers living in the county increased to over 128,000. Only 69 percent (88,963) of these workers actually worked in Dutchess, with the remaining 27 percent (34,618) commuting to other Hudson Valley communities and 3.8 percent (4,856) commuting to neighboring states. These preliminary numbers suggest that fewer residents are staying within the county to work. This trend is most apparent in the southern portion of the county, where a number of communities have half or more of their workers commuting to jobs outside Dutchess. According to the 2000 Census, the highest percentage of out-of-county commuters reside in the town and village of Pawling (59% and 58% respectively), East Fishkill (52%), and Beekman (50%). Throughout these changes though, the City and Town of Poughkeepsie still served as the two major employment centers of the county (Figure A-3). More detailed data on commuter destinations will come from the 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP).

Future Trends (Beyond 2000)

The Dutchess County Forecasting Project estimated that the number of jobs in the county would approach 151,800 by 2020 - given a moderate-growth scenario. The forecast also indicates that the City and Town of Poughkeepsie will continue to retain the highest number of employment opportunities in the county, though their job growth rates will lag behind some of the smaller communities. The towns of East Fishkill, Fishkill, and Hyde Park will also maintain their role as secondary employment centers for the foreseeable future.

Travel Implications

Obviously, an increase in the number of workers equates to an increase in commuting and work-related travel. The impacts of this trend would be more sustainable if employees worked within the county and lived near our major employment centers. Yet, an increasing number of local workers are working outside the county. The lucrative employment centers of Westchester County and NYC clearly appeal to many workers; workers who can now afford more for their money in areas like Dutchess versus downstate. This is most apparent with relation to housing costs; according to the 2000 Census, the 2000 median house value in Westchester County was \$285,800 compared to \$154,200 in Dutchess County. Such differences have helped fuel the migration of downstate families into Dutchess.

Travel Characteristics

Many factors play into the transportation modes used by residents. Some of the more important factors include the locations of and distance between home and work, a family's socioeconomic status, and the actual transportation options available. Naturally, not all communities in Dutchess County share identical travel patterns. Local differences in travel behavior can be partly attributable to variations in population densities and economic make-up. By their nature, municipalities with high densities, provide their residents with a more conducive environment to walk or bike in (Figure A-4). These also benefit from their close proximity to regular transit service, and, in turn, offer residents an alternative to using a private automobile (Figure A-5). In addition to the modal choices we make, another important facet of travel behavior involves the reasons why we travel. The 1995 New York State portion of the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) uncovered some interesting aspects concerning trip purposes and lengths in the Poughkeepsie metropolitan area (Dutchess County). Surprisingly, earning a living ranked third as a determinant of daily personal trips. Other purposes such as participating in social or recreational activities and attending to family and personal business (e.g. shopping, medical appointments) ranked as more common reasons for making a trip. However, with regard to explaining the number of vehicle miles traveled, trips made to earn a living ranked the highest (38.5%). This data indicates that people travel farther distances to earn a living than to reach non-work related destinations. The NPTS also indicated that the average trip length (regardless of mode) in Dutchess County was approximately 10.41 miles, which

was higher than the state average of 7.74 miles and the national average of 9.23 miles (Figure 1-5).

The 2000 Census revealed notable increases in the average commute times for Dutchess County workers. In 2000, the average commute time was 29.8 minutes, which represents a 21.6 percent increase over 1990 (24.5 minutes) and a 32.4 percent increase over 1980 (22.5 minutes). The communities with the highest average commute times included the towns of Pawling (38.3 minutes), East Fishkill (38.1 minutes), and Beekman (37.8 minutes), all of which are located in the southern portion of the County and tend to have more long distance commuters to Westchester, Connecticut and NYC.

Auto Use

Travel trends in the county follow many national patterns. As is the case with the U.S., the privately owned and operated automobile represents the most preferred mode of travel in the county. This is true for commuting to work, going shopping, or pursuing recreational activities. In the past 15 years alone, the number of vehicle miles within the county increased by 52 percent, while the population grew by less than 10 percent. According to 2000 Census data, almost 88 percent of county workers used an automobile to commute to their jobs and, of that 88 percent, 79.5 percent drove alone. By contrast, only 68 percent of Dutchess commuters drove alone to work in 1980 (Figure 1-6).

The importance of the auto in personal travel is not limited to commuting. The 1995 New York State portion of the Nationwide Personal Travel Survey showed that the privately operated automobile (both single and multi-occupancy) was used in 89.6 percent of all daily trips in the Poughkeepsie metropolitan area. It also reported that the average vehicle trip in the metropolitan area was 10.54 miles long.

Increases in the driver-aged population and auto availability will affect the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the county. Projections by WEFA, a private firm, for New York State indicate that daily VMT rates will increase to 5.3 million by 2005, which represents a 50 percent increase from 1990 levels. These VMT figures will continue to climb as increases in population, auto availability, and low-density land uses take place. The same WEFA calculations show that VMT rates will grow by approximately 1.7 percent a year between 2005 and 2020, with a projected daily VMT of 6.7 million by 2020.

Transit Use

As a whole, the percentage of workers who use mass transit increased slightly between 1960 and 2000. In 1960, 3.7 percent of all workers used public transportation. According to 2000 Census data, approximately 4.2 percent of all workers used some form of mass transit to get to work. For all personal trips in Dutchess County, the 1995 NYS NPTS indicated that mass transit was used less than one percent of the time.

Historically, the majority of workers who use bus transportation commute to jobs within the county, while the vast majority of rail commuters use trains to reach job locations located in the New York City metro area. The County continues to experience increased ridership on inter-county rail services to Westchester County and New York City. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of weekday rail commuters increased from 2,617 to 4,600 - a 76 percent increase. In addition, the recent construction of two Metro-North stations at Ten Mile River and Wassaic indicates that service providers anticipate growth in local ridership.

However, the evolving growth patterns of more dispersed land-uses within Dutchess make it difficult to provide adequate bus services. This characteristic, aggravated by limited local bus resources, negatively impacts the appeal of using a bus to commute to work. Of course there are some opportunities to make bus commuting more appealing. County residents who commute to Westchester County and points south could be swayed to use shuttle bus/van services and/or participate in ridesharing programs. Currently, there are a number of inter-county transit services, commuter train connection (CTC) services, and car/van pool services (MetroPool) available to area commuters. Continued support of these programs could help ease some of the peak hour congestion on the region's roads.

One method of alleviating future road congestion will involve the promotion and use of public transportation services. Within Dutchess County, the primary providers of such services are: the City of Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County LOOP and MTA/Metro-North Railroad. Inter-county services are currently provided by MTA/Metro-North Railroad, Leprechaun Bus Lines to White Plains and between Newburgh and Beacon, ShortLine to New York City, and by the Arrow Bus Line to New Paltz.

Bicycling, Walking, and Working at Home/Telecommuting

Between 1960 and 2000, the percentage of commuters who did not use an automobile or transit service to get to work decreased from 15.4 percent in 1960 to 7.8 percent in 2000. More specifically, the percentage of workers who walked to work dropped from 13.2 percent in 1960 to a low 3.9 percent in 2000, with the Village of Millbrook and towns of North East and Red Hook containing the highest percentage of residents who walked to work.

The reasons for the decline in walking and biking entail many factors, but mostly involve the increased separation between various land uses, the lack of safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and the relatively inexpensive costs of operating an automobile. However, these factors can be reversed, subsequently producing an environment more conducive to human powered transportation. The promotion of other forms of transportation, such as bicycling and walking for shorter trips, are viable methods for reducing traffic congestion on local roads and decreasing our dependence on the private automobile.

One facet of the modern economy worth noting deals with the increased popularity of working at home or telecommuting. New technologies, coupled with changing work environments, allow some employees to work at home one or more days during a typical work week. The 2000 Census indicated that 3.2% of all workers worked at home, a modest increase from the 2.4% that worked at home in 1990.

Auto Availability

A majority of county households have experienced increased levels of auto availability through the years. In 1960, almost 15 percent of the county's households had no car available; by 2000 the rate dropped to less than 8 percent. At the same time, the percentage of households with three or more automobiles increased from 3 percent to more than 19 percent.

The contrasts in auto availability between the various local communities are striking (Figure A-6). For instance, 42 percent of the households in the county have two automobiles available, and 19 percent have three or more available. Yet, in the Village of Fishkill, 28 percent of the households do not own an automobile, while in the City of Poughkeepsie the rate equals 24 percent. In contrast, some communities contain high-rates of car ownership. Almost 34 percent of the households in the town of East Fishkill own three or more cars, which is the county high, followed closely by the towns of Union Vale, Beekman, and Clinton.

Irrespective of the variations among the county's local communities, it seems apparent that cars will remain the preferred mode of travel for residents. Between 1960 and 2000, the number of registered automobiles in Dutchess grew from 59,000 to over 199,000, thus altering the ratio of cars to total population from approximately 1:3 to well under 1:2. Concurrently, the ranks of licensed drivers increased from 109,000 to just over 199,000. These figures support the historical pattern of vehicle ownership and usage out-pacing growths in population; however, this pattern is not expected to continue into the future. Given the pattern experienced by the county in the last ten years, the projected 25 percent increase in the over 16 population (eligible drivers) during the next two decades could produce a 15 percent increase in the number of registered vehicles in the county.

Environmental Justice and Transportation Planning

The residents of Dutchess County have the right to live in an environment that affords them safe and economical mobility and, in turn, provides for an improved quality of life. This is the fundamental premise behind the concept of environmental justice. Public policy, including transportation policy, has and will continue to affect communities in varying ways. In some cases, transportation decisions can unintentionally aggravate already poor conditions in certain socioeconomic groups. It is the goal of environmental justice to prevent such occurrences from happening, and to also ensure that transportation planners and decision-makers take into account the potential effects of

various policies on sensitive populations. Furthermore, policy makers must ensure that public investment is distributed fairly among communities and not biased against certain groups and areas.

Accordingly, the PDCTC remains committed to the principles of environmental justice. We will endeavor to ensure that the recommendations contained in this plan do not negatively impact the livability of communities deemed most sensitive to our policies. How then, does environmental justice apply to the Poughkeepsie Metropolitan Area? During the preparation of this plan, the PDCTC set out to identify those areas which required increased awareness. These areas would include places that have higher than county average concentrations of minority populations and persons living in poverty. The study identified census tracts containing above average concentrations of Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, and persons living in poverty. In order to mitigate the effects of data outliers, the Asian, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders population groups were combined and measured as one population segment. The 2000 US Census provided the data for this analysis.

The results of this analysis identified a number of census tracts with higher than average proportions in minority populations and/or persons living in poverty (Figure 1-7). Fifteen census tracts, located in the cities of Beacon and Poughkeepsie, towns of Poughkeepsie and Fishkill, and the Village of Wappingers Falls, contained above average percentages for at least three of the four sensitive population groups. Eight census tracts were above average for two of the indicators, and another sixteen tracts were above average for one of the indicators.

In all, the analysis discovered that those tracts rated as having a very high or high sensitivity level included a spectrum of communities, ranging from urban neighborhoods to suburbs, and villages. The lesson of this thus becomes two-fold: 1) environmental justice applies to all communities, not just those we may perceive as being sensitive, and 2) since environmental justice affects such a geographically diverse set of communities, its application and support requires a regional approach to transportation planning -- a mission well-suited for metropolitan planning organizations such as ours.

Recent Developments

The past decade saw the county emerge from a slow, unstable economy, into an economy of strong growth and new potential. In the early 1990's, the county experienced a serious downturn in employment opportunities for local workers. IBM, a major employer at the time, reduced its workforce by 10,000 at two county facilities. In the eastern part of the county, the State closed the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center in 1994. Though a small part of the work force was transferred to the Hudson River Psychiatric Center in Poughkeepsie; the closing meant a loss of 1,500 jobs in the rural Harlem Valley. The Taconic Developmental Disabilities Services Office (Taconic DDSO) in Amenia also reduced its operations considerably. Proposals for re-using both state facilities are still being considered.

Despite the early downsizing at many of the area's largest employers, new employment opportunities emerged in the mid to late-nineties. In July 1994, Dutchess County established four Economic Development Zones (EDZ's): one in the City of Poughkeepsie, one in East Fishkill, and two in the Town of Poughkeepsie. These zones receive tax credits and incentives to promote business and economic growth. Some of the more notable results of the EDZ program include: the Philips semiconductor plant in East Fishkill, which employs 950; the Postal Remote Encoding Center in Fishkill with 440 employees; and the Laerdal Medical Corporation in Wappinger with 240 employees. In 2000, the EDZ boundaries were consolidated and reconfigured into a single Empire Zone (EZ).

The future appears to bode well for the county's economy, in spite of the recent weakening of the national economy. This is evident in the Town of Fishkill, which is the new home of the Old Navy/GAP Northeast distribution center with over 950 workers. In addition, IBM recently completed construction of a new manufacturing plant at their East Fishkill facility.

Summary

Connections 2025 is the most recent in a long line of transportation plans for Dutchess County. The emphasis and recommendations of these plans have evolved in response to changing trends, priorities, and funding levels.

This transportation plan examines all aspects of the area's surface transportation system: highways, bridges, bus transit, rail transit, freight movement, bicycles, and pedestrians, and makes recommendations regarding system improvements and changes. Some of the recommendations have been adopted from previous plans, while others are new. Infrastructure repair and maintenance projects, and capacity and service expansions for the various highway and transit systems are identified as important recommendations in the area. As in previous plans, the main goal has been to develop and maintain a transportation system that will meet the mobility needs of the region's residents, businesses, and travelers.